

## Childhood Obesity is a National Epidemic

Since 1980, the presence of childhood overweight has tripled. 35% of youth today do not participate in regular, vigorous physical activity.<sup>1</sup> And only 2% of youth meet the Food Guide Pyramid recommendations for all five major food groups.<sup>2</sup> Eating too much and exercising too little can lead to overweight, obesity and related health problems that can follow children into adult years. And it can adversely impact learning, confidence, and energy levels. What can you do to help?

## Get Your School and Students Involved in Physical Activity Events

There are many existing physical activity programs that your school can participate in:

- Indiana Governor's Fitness Award ([www.in.gov/isdh/programs/fitness/fa-index.html](http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/fitness/fa-index.html))
- Walk to School Week (October 4-8, 2004) and Day (October 6) ([www.walktoschool-usa.org](http://www.walktoschool-usa.org))
- All Children Exercising Simultaneously Day-May 4, 2005 (<http://members.aol.com/acesday/index.html>)
- Hoops for Heart and Jump Rope for Heart ([www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org))



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2001

## Build Nutrition and Exercise into Your Lesson Plans

The following sites are excellent resources for teachers (and parents and kids). They contain information on school-based nutrition programs, best practice ideas for fun physical activities, and free kids games that are entertaining and educational:

- BAM! Body and Mind ([www.bam.gov/index.htm](http://www.bam.gov/index.htm))
- Kids Health ([www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org))
- Kidnetic ([www.kidnetic.org](http://www.kidnetic.org))
- Five-a-Day ([www.5aday.com](http://www.5aday.com))
- PE Central ([www.pecentral.org](http://www.pecentral.org))



## Support the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service Action Goals

The following goals have been adapted from The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, [www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/)

- Provide age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction in health education and physical education that help students develop healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.
- Provide students with behavior-focused nutrition education integrated into the curriculum.
- Ensure that meals offered through all school feeding programs meet federal nutrition standards.
- Adopt policies ensuring that all foods and beverages available on school campuses and at school events contribute toward eating patterns that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Provide food options that are low in fat, calories and added sugars, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat dairy foods.

- Ensure that healthy snacks and foods are provided in vending machines, school stores and other venues within the school's control.



- Prohibit/restrict student access to vending machines, school stores, and other venues that contain foods of minimal nutritional value.
- Provide an adequate amount of time for students to eat school meals, and schedule lunch periods at reasonable hours around midday.
- Provide students with quality daily physical education.
- Provide daily supervised, active play (recess) for elementary school students.
- Provide adequate co-curricular physical activity programs, including fully inclusive intra-mural programs and physical activity clubs.
- Encourage the use of school facilities for physical activity programs offered by the school and/or community-based organizations outside of school hours.

## Learn About CSH Programs

Coordinated School Health Programs (CSHP) work to improve children's health and remove barriers to learning. CSHP help students become healthy adults by coordinating parents, schools, and communities and teaching children how to make healthy choices. The Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana State Department of Health are working together to bring CSHP to Indiana. Find out more at [www.doe.state.in.us/cshp](http://www.doe.state.in.us/cshp).



## Be a Voice for Nutrition

Students need appealing and healthful food choice options in the school cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers and school events. High-fat and high-sugar foods have been linked to behavioral problems such as hyperactivity. Whitefish Central School in Montana eliminated soda from vending machines and replaced it with water and 100% fruit juices. New vending machines offer sandwiches, yogurt, bagels, fruit and milk. Candy bars are not available during school hours. Whitefish's discipline referrals after lunch decreased from 6-8 referrals per day to 1-2 per week!

## Get Free Resources

The Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) Indiana State Team is providing all state superintendents with a resource kit of before/after school activities and nutrition programs. The team is also recruiting schools to offer fruits and vegetables and non-fat or low-fat dairy products. For more information call Sara Titzer at 317-962-9017 or [stitzer@clarian.org](mailto:stitzer@clarian.org).

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# Promoting Physical Activity and Sound Nutrition Habits

*A Teacher's Guide to Preventing Childhood Obesity*

